WEEKEND
The Force is strong in latest Star Wars epic 'The Last Jedi,' 3G

SPORTS
David Beckham on the brink of being granted Miami MLS team, 1B

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WINNER OF 22 PULITZER PRIZES

FRIDAY DECEMBER 15 2017

$2

Partly cloudy, warmer 76°/55° See 12B

Miami Herald

H1

CITY OF MIAMI: TRAFFIC

Miami pulls the plug on its red light camera program

Miami Herald graphic

Miami commissioners voted unanimously to end the program.

BY DAVID SMILEY
dsmiley@miamiherald.com

The days of wincing while driving through a Miami intersection on a yellow light will soon be over after city commissioners agreed Thursday to end their red light camera program early next year.

By a unanimous vote, Miami commissioners chose to cancel their 2010 contract with American Traffic Solutions to maintain and operate dozens of red light cameras around the city. The vote gives the company 60 days to wind down its lucrative operations in the city, and allows Mayor Francis Suarez and City Commissioner Joe Carollo to say they kept a campaign promise.

For drivers in the city, the cancellation of the contract means that their license tags will no longer be photographed and reported by cameras perched above intersections around the city, although cameras will still exist elsewhere in Miami-Dade County. Citations running $158 a pop will vanish along with the cameras, but anyone hit with one before the program ends should still ex-

SEE CAMERAS, 2A

The Boys & Girls Club sold out of its 5,000 Christmas trees about six days earlier than it usually does.

PHOTOS BY AL DIAZ adiaz@miamiherald.com

HOLIDAY SEASON 2017

Xmas tree shortage has 'customers panicking'

Miami is feeling the effects of a national Christmas tree shortage as customers scramble to find a shapely specimen, but worry they might have to settle for a scrawny or artificial one.

BY LINDA ROBERTSON
lrobertson@miamiherald.com

Ho, ho, oh, no. If you haven't bought your Christmas tree yet, you may be scrooged.

Miamians are feeling the effects of a national Christmas tree shortage as they scramble to find a shapely specimen and worry they may have to settle for a scrawny Charlie Brown version.

"Customers are panicking, and when they come in here they say, 'Thank God we found you,' " said Chris Winkler, who runs Holiday Sales. Two of his three locations — 8445 SW 72nd Ave. and 8200 SW 104th St. — are still open with 500 trees each, which he expects to last through the weekend. "I've got everything from 4 to 17 feet tall. I spent a lot of sleepless nights this year tracking down farmers with nice trees. They are in short supply."

Other popular spots ran out of trees and closed last week. The Boys & Girls Club sold out of its 5,000 trees about six days earlier than it usually does, and the big tent on U.S. 1 has gone from aromatically festive to totally deserted.

"Our sales went really well and really fast," said Alex Rodriguez-Roig, president of the organization. "The quality of the premium trees was as good as ever but there just aren't enough of them."

High demand for trees, especially the Fraser firs that dominate the South Florida market, has pushed prices up 10 to 15 percent.

Anthony Martinez, who runs Santa's Garden, is selling more concolor or white fir trees this year because his suppliers — and he had to call 30 of them — couldn't fill his usual order for 4,000 Frasers.

"The concolor actually has a better shape and once you decorate them it's hard to tell which is which," said Martinez, who has plenty of trees at the main location of the seven in Miami run by his family at 10901 Coral Way.

The tree shortage originated during the Great Recession in 2007 when demand was low and farmers didn't have room to plant new trees. It takes up to 10 years to grow a Christmas

SEE TREES, 2A

Danny Javier Martinez walks around the Christmas trees being sold at Santa's Garden in Miami on Thursday. Miami is feeling the national tree shortage as many sellers ran out of trees and closed down.

AL DIAZ adiaz@miamiherald.com

Donald and Doreen Mincey, parents of 22-month-old Connor Mincey, speak to the media on Thursday.

MIAMI DAYCARE TRAGEDY

Parents followed orders, but diagnosis came too late

BY DANIEL CHANG
dchang@miamiherald.com

The day that a Miami child-care center sent Connor Mincey home ill, the child's parents took him to see a pediatrician, who diagnosed the 22-month-old boy with a cold and signed a note clearing him to return to care and attesting that he was not contagious.

But Connor never returned to the YWCA Carol Glassman Donaldson Childcare Center in downtown Miami. He died two weeks later on Dec. 3 of pneumococcal meningitis — the first of two children at the child-care center who died after falling ill.

On Thursday, Connor's parents, Doreen and Donald Mincey, held

SEE MENINGITIS, 4A

THE INTERNET

FCC votes to repeal net neutrality regulations

JIM PUZZANGHERA
Los Angeles Times

WASHINGTON – Federal regulators voted on Thursday to repeal Obama-era net neutrality rules for internet traffic – a major victory for telecommunications companies and another milestone for the Republican deregulation push under President Trump.

The 3-2 party-line vote by the Federal Communications Commission tears down the controversial utility-like oversight of internet service providers that was put in place by Democrats in 2015 to try to ensure the uninhibited flow of data online.

That strict regulatory structure

SEE NEUTRALITY, 2A

POLITICS

RUBIO MAY VOTE 'NO' ON TAX BILL

Sen. Marco Rubio wants a child tax credit expanded in President Trump's tax overhaul. **8A**

SPORTS

NEW DEAL SOON FOR LANDRY?

The Dolphins are in talks to finally sign receiver Jarvis Landry to a long-term deal. **1B**

BUSINESS

HIDDEN CAMERA ON CARNIVAL SHIP

A family claims to find a hidden camera in their stateroom aboard the Carnival ship Fantasy. **6A**

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